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ABSTRACT

These program materials from the Library Sign Systems Workshop include a news story on the workshop; notes in outline form for a speech presented by Joe Sonderman, president of a graphic designs firm; and an annotated bibliography on signs and sign systems. The news release summarizes a presentation by Dorothy Pollet and Peter Haskell, editors of "Sign Systems for Libraries," who asserted that all library patrons have the right to find their own way around the library through the use of a good signage program and that many signs are used that make libraries appear amateurish, intimidating, and bureaucratic. Pollet then illustrated ways librarians can analyze signage needs, using mock-ups and models to test solutions. Sonderman addressed the participation of graphic designers and stressed the need for a good manual in design systems. The outline of his speech covers design process, planning the graphics, sign categories, materials and methods, special techniques, decision factors, and service provided by design consultants. (CWM)

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LIBRARY SIGN SYSTEMS

Workshop Program Materials

by

Patricia M. Ridgeway

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Program materials from the South Carolina Library Association
Public Services Section Workshop, "Library Sign Systems"
Columbia, S.C., April 19, 1979

LIBRARY SIGN SYSTEMS WORKSHOP

INFORMATION PACKET

The Library Sign Systems Workshop, held April 19, 1979, was sponsored by the Public Service Section of the South Carolina Library Association. Trish Ridgeway, vice-chair of the section, organized and directed the workshop.

Numerous requests for information have been received. The attached package provides basic information on the workshop. Included are

Registration form
Program
News stories from before and after the workshop
Joe Sonderman's speech outline
Biographical information on speakers
Exercise for workshop participants
Bibliography by William Prince
New book notice
Sources of information on speakers
Sources of information on exhibitors

For additional information, contact Trish Ridgeway, Head, Reference Department, Winthrop College Library, Rock Hill, S.C. 29733.

News story on workshop

Library sign systems are a hot topic if the response to the South Carolina Library Association workshop on that subject is any indication. Dorothy Pollet and Peter Haskell, editors of Sign Systems for Libraries, a Bowker June release, addressed an enthusiastic audience of North and South Carolina librarians April 19 in Columbia, S.C. Providing a perspective from outside the profession were graphic designer Joe Sonderman and exhibitors of sign materials and machines.

Pollet, Educational Liaison Officer in the Library of Congress, asserted that all library patrons have the right to find their own way around the library through the use of a good signage program. However, in a review of the state of library signage, Haskell found a wilderness in which many first-time library users struggle to locate library services. Haskell, who is Director of the Franklin & Marshall College Library in Lancaster, Pa., charged that libraries have too many signs in a mixture of styles at various eye levels. The message on the signs is often unclear, too wordy, or irrelevant to the library patron. "Some of my colleagues in the library profession have told me we're not in the image-making business, but we are,"stated Haskell, giving examples of signs that make libraries appear amateurish, intimidating and bureaucratic.

Sonderman, President of the Charlotte, N.C. graphic design firm, Design/Joe Sonderman, Inc., stated that graphic designers can extensively participate in a signage project or can simply serve as consultants but they should be involved in the planning as early as possible. Regardless of whether you use a graphic designer or not, Sonderman stressed, "The

single most important aspect of any good graphic program is a manual that lays out in black and white and in simple terminology the rules and regulations for the consistent usage of the graphic." Sonderman added that a good design system should relate to the architecture and interior space, should use the least number of words and signs, and should have a sense of order.

Dorothy Pollet illustrated ways librarians can analyze their libraries' signage needs. Observe library users, advised Pollet. "Which signs do people heed and which do they ignore? Where do people have to stop and decide what to do next? Where are areas of confusion?" After identifying patron behavior patterns, Pollet thinks temporary sign mock-ups and photographic models are good methods to test solutions before investing money in a final system.

According to Pollet, people find their way around their environment through non-dimensional learning in which they know only one route to and from each destination and through dimensional learning in which they have developed cognitive maps and have a complete idea of an area. Sign systems in libraries are very necessary to people whose skills in the library are still non-dimensional. Such a system can direct them to their destination, reassure them they are still on the correct path, and identify the destination when they reach it. Pollet says radically simplified maps and models of the library help patrons develop cognitive maps and become more flexible library users.

"There is a new awareness of library signage," stated the workshop

director, Trish Ridgeway of the Winthrop College Library, Rock Hill, S.C. Librarians from across the country have written for information on having signage workshops."

Lecture Notes

SCLA PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION WORKSHOP
JOE SONDERMAN PRESIDENT DESIGN/JOE SONDERMAN, INC.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

The purpose of the library sign is an extension of the library's information retrieval system. They should make the facility accessible and understandable to the user - both staff and visitor.

Signs cannot single-handily accomplish all communications objectives. They should, therefore, be integrated with architect, interior design, facility maintenance and library personnel behavioral needs.

The planning process should consider the following:

1. Components should relate to the architecture and interior design.
2. The system should use the least number of signs with the fewest words possible.
3. A sense of order is essential.
4. The system should provide a consistent application method.
5. A graphic controls manual should be provided.
6. Planning should begin at early stages.
7. Potential supplier sources.

PLANNING THE GRAPHICS

In planning the actual messages and their locations, the procedure is always the same regardless of the type of facility. It should establish:

1. User categories
2. The typical destinations
3. The traffic flow
4. Decision points
5. Determining the messages and the size
6. Consideration of the handicapped
7. Vandalism

SIGN CATEGORIES

Signs should be established into categories to simplify procedures. Those categories might include:

1. Identification
2. Directional
3. Orientation
4. Information
5. Regulatory

over

MATERIALS & METHODS

The number of materials and methods available for sign fabrication is large, but generally a methodology to be utilized will be regulated or directly related to the restrictions of cost, availability and aesthetic considerations. The following are various materials that are available:

1. Adhesive, die-cut letters
2. Transfer letters
3. Photographic film
4. Plastic
5. Wood
6. Metal

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

Other techniques are available to generate interest within your facility. This can include photographic enlargements, audio-visual devices, illuminated signs.

DECISION FACTORS

The following are factors that should be considered when deciding on the system:

1. Sign placement
2. Message content
3. Message size and placement
4. Sign size and configuration
5. Message form and style
6. Sign and message color
7. Sign construction
8. Sign implementation

DESIGN CONSULTANTS

Generally, the following professions are capable of providing the services required:

1. Graphic Designers
2. Industrial Designers
3. Interior Designers/Architects
4. Sign Manufacturers

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON SIGNS AND SIGN SYSTEMS

William W. Prince

American Hospital Association. Signs and Graphics for Health Care Facilities. Chicago: American Hospital Association, 1979. 70pp.
Written for administrators and designers, the book offers practical directions for determining the sign system needed and discusses considerations of design, selection, purchase, installation and maintenance.

American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA). Symbol Signs: The Development of Passenger/Pedestrian Oriented Symbols for Use in Transportation-Related Facilities. Springfield, Va., NTIS, 1974. 172pp.
"The report includes detailed descriptions of the process employeed to create the symbols as well as guidelines for their use" (Abstract, p.1.) The guidel'ne section (pp. 119-131) covering legibility criteria, proper lettering size, fabrication, location signs, hanging signs and directional signs is most useful. Available from NTIS, contract no. DOT-OS-40192.

Bezant, Jane, et al. "Helping Users Find Their Way." Wisconsin Library Bulletin 73 (Jul/Aug 1977):145-174.
A collection of articles by several authors suggests methods (library orientation, library media skills curriculum, library instruction, tours,signs) for helping library users find their way around a library media center.

Best in Environmental Graphics 1975- The Print Casebook Series. Washington, D.C.: R.C.Publications, 1975-.
The extensive illustrations in this work provide highly informative examples of environmental graphics systems in a wide range of areas.

Brutton, Mark et al, "Design Evaluation: ICOGRADA in Chicago," Design (U.K.) 354 June 1978:44-63
The series of articles by different authors offers accounts of four graphic programs (Washington, D.C. Metro, People's Culture Center, museum exhibit and a magazine) and illustrates the application of design evaluation techniques for each program.

Carey, R.J.P. Library Guiding: A Program for Exploiting Library Resources.London: Clive Bingley, 1974. 136pp.
The major value of the book is its broad treatment of a guiding system of which a sign system is one aspect. Emphasizes the need of a guiding system to answer: What can the library offer? Where is it to be found? How can it be used?

Claus, R. James and Claus, Karen E. Signage: Planning Environmental Visual Communication. Palo Alto, California: Institute of Signage Research, 1976. 68pp.
Discusses the functions of signs in the environment, the effectiveness of signs, and their use as a planning tool. 120 illustrations.

Crosby/ Fletcher/ Forbes. A Sign Systems Manual. London: Studio Vista, 1970. 76pp.
With helpful illustrations and concise text, this publication serves as a guide to the design of a basic signage system applicable to public service environment.

Directional and Informational Signs for Educational Facilities: A Selective Bibliography. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin, ERIC Clearinghouse on Education Facilities, 1970.14pp. ED040511.
Lists materials dealing with physiological, psychological, sociological and visual design considerations.

Dreyfuss, Henry. Symbol Sourcebook: An Authoritative Guide to International Graphic Symbols. N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1972, 292pp.
This comprehensive work includes instructional, directional, and warning symbols grouped by discipline and subdiscipline, by graphic form and by meaning. An extensive bibliography (pp. 252-267).

Environmental Graphics Sourcebook--Part One: Materials and Techniques. Chicago: Society of Environmental Graphics Designers, 1978. 52pp.
Includes brief descriptions of the wide range of technology available, including adhesive film, plastics, wood, metal, neon, paper, stone, imprint, coatings, and illumination. Part Two lists sign manufacturers and their capabilities. Part Three relates elements of the design process (contracts, fees, etc).

Follis, John and Hammer, Dave. Architectural Signage and Graphics. N.Y.: Whitney Library of Design, 1979. 224p.
The process of designing a sign system is described in detail and guidelines are established for solving esthetic and functional problems dealing with signage. Technical subjects include contracts and specification writing, fabrication techniques and materials, and alphabets and symbol usage.

Grimley, Susan. "Signs and Graphic Displays:A Survey of Their Use in Public Libraries" Master's thesis, Univ. of Chicago, 1974. 120pp.
"The results of a pilot examination of the signs and graphic displays in use in thirty-nine medium sized public libraries" is presented (Abstract). Bibliography. One of the few studies conducted on library signage.

Herdeg, Walter, ed. Archigraphia: Architectural and Environmental Graphics. Zurich: Graphis Press, 1970 (distributed in the U.S. by Hastings House, N.Y.) 235pp.
A lavishly illustrated overview of architectural and graphics signage (pictograms, traffic signs, visual guidance systems, graphics, and lettering on buildings and supergraphics and animated walls), with introductory commentary by prominent designers. Helpful as a state-of-the-art review.

Knoebone, Peter, et al. "International Signs and Symbols: Special ICOGRADA Issue". Print 23 (Nov/Dec'69):25-89
The entire issue is devoted to a collection of articles by sign specialists. These topics include the legibility, grammar, uses and abuses of signs, sign/symbol coordination, semiotics and signs, sign design research, semantography, and sign systems for international events. Bibliography.

Kosterman, Wayne. "Guide to Library Environmental Graphics". Library Technology Reports 14 (May-June 1978) 269-295.
Includes aspects of library interior signage such as planning considerations, sign categories, decision factors, consultants and suppliers. Recommended reading.

Langmead, Stephen and Beckman, Margaret. New Library Design: Guide Lines to Planning Academic Library Buildings. Toronto, Canada:Wiley, 1970. 117pp.
The Library Design and Construction chapter provides a succinct discussion of most aspects of a library sign system. Places it in the perspective of the total architectural scheme. Bibliography.

Lockwood, James D. "Involving Consultants in Library Change". College and Research Libraries 38 (Nov.1977) 498-508.
Lockwood discusses considerations for involving consultants in an library project and outlines this process. Bibliography.

Lushington, Nolan, and Mills. Libraries Designed for Users: The Library Planning Handbook. Syracuse, N.Y.: Gaylord, 1979.
Emphasizes the "information center" library design. Discusses the impact that physical settings have on the interaction of users with a variety of media and services.

Madley, Rudolf. "Speaking of Sign Language". Industrial Design 23 (July 1976): 60-63.
Madley covers the value and potential of pictorial signage systems, universal graphic symbols and corporate logos. Revised and updated version of his article

"World Language Without Words," Journal of Communication 24 (Autumn 1974): 59-66.

Noyes, Eliot. "Study for an IBM Sign Design Program". Architectural Record 127 (June 1960): 157-164.

Describes the development of a comprehensive external sign program for all IBM plants and illustrates both effective and ineffective uses.

Pollett, Dorothy. "You Can Get There From Here: New Directions in Library Signage." Wilson Library Bulletin 50 (Feb.1976):456-462.

Covers various aspects of library signage including basic principles in designing a signage system. Defines the library's user groups and their missions, the role of the information desk in the design model and the use of color coding. Discusses "You are here" maps and directories and provides some down-to-earth suggestions for librarians designing their own signage systems.

Pollet, Dorothy and Haskell, Peter C. eds. Sign Systems for Libraries: Solving the Wayfinding Problem. New York: Bowker, 1979.ca. 300pp.

This work is a state-of-the-art symposium by specialists in the field of design architecture, psychology, geography, optometry, and library science on the topic of visual guidance systems for libraries. It covers all visual means for making the library accessible and understandable. Included is an appendix of technical and psychological considerations and an annotated bibliography. Highly recommended.

Smith, C. Ray. "Graphic Renovation Earns Dividends". Industrial Design 24 (July/Aug 1977) 44-47.

A bank's three basic messages (directional, service area identification and promotional) were analyzed to improve traffic flow (avoiding queuing problems) and the customer's understanding of the total environment. Included illustrations with brief descriptions.

Smith, Charles W. :Sign Systems," Interior Design (New York) 46 (Oct 1975): 148-153.

Describes in detail five phases in developing a sign system when using an interior designer. Particularly helpful for learning the process of developing a well designed sign system.

Spencer, Herbert and Reynolds, Linda. Directional Signing and Labelling in Libraries and Museums: A Review of Current Theory and Practice. London: Readability of Print Research Unit, Royal College of Art, 1977. 117pp.

Provides theoretical and practical guidelines for the design of signing, guiding and labelling systems. This concisely written work with extensive topical bibliographies is most helpful for those developing a graphic system. Highly recommended.

Stevenson, Malcolm. "Progress in Documentation: Education of Users of Libraries and Information Services". Journal of Documentation 33 (March 1977): 53-70.

Stevenson provides a comprehensive review of user education literature, including a section on library guidance systems (pp.64-65) and library guides(p.65).

U.S. General Services Administration. Manual on the Design of Sign/Symbol for Federal Facilities. Washington, D.C.? U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979. ca.141

This manual of uniform standards for interior and exterior sign requirements for federal facilities includes a "How to" instructional manual for developing and maintaining in-house sign systems. Appendix I, "Design Guidelines on Symbol Signs for Public Buildings" could be most helpful. Not available until it appears in the U.S. Monthly Catalog.

Resources for Journal Articles on Signs and Sign Systems.

To date the most fruitful resource for locating articles on signs and sign systems has been the Art Index. Architectural Index (Denver), Architectural Periodicals Index(London), Education Index and Library Literature have also yielded relevant articles. For a theoretical approach consult Language and Language Behavior Abstracts. Journals devoted exclusively to this subject are Signs of the Times 1906- and Signage Quarterly, 1979-. Design(London), Print, Industrial Design, AIA Journal